

**A FIVE-YEAR TECHNOLOGY PLAN FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN
THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**

2003-2007

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY
ACT (LSTA)
INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES
NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

**DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
Sharlene Harris
Director and Territorial Librarian**

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Dean C. Plaskett, Esq.
Commissioner**

**Claudette C. Lewis
Exec. Asst. Commissioner**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
Charles W. Turnbull
Governor**

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Introduction

The United States Virgin Islands is located 1100 miles from the North American continent between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The islands, a territory of the United States, are made up of four major landmasses surrounded by approximately one hundred smaller islands and tiny cays. The four major islands are St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and the fourth, Water Island, was turned over to the USVI from the Department of Interior in the year 2000. Located just a half mile off the south side of St. Thomas, Water Island is served by St. Thomas offices. The Capitol of the USVI is Charlotte Amalie, the city located on St. Thomas.

The islands' population is approximately 110,000 people of which almost 80% are of African descent. Other groups represented include East Indians, Whites, Chinese, Arabs and Hispanics. As such, the population is a diverse one.

Administration of the Library Services and Technology Act is the responsibility of the Territorial Library Agency. This agency, the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums, falls under the Government of the Virgin Islands' Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

Territory-wide, no distinction is made between the local and state levels. The Division of Libraries participates in the direct provision of public library service as well as in the administrative, centralized technical services and systems functions.

The Division of Libraries is located in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. In addition to the four major public libraries located throughout the three major Virgin Islands, the Division also operates a bookmobile, a small kiosk library and a Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, all located on St. Croix. The Division also maintains special collections of Virgin Islands materials and a photo duplication lab, where local newspapers and other Virgin Islands government documents are microfilmed and duplications of old photographs are made.

Mission Statement

The Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums believes:

- the history and cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands should be preserved and studied
- the public libraries should serve as the information resource for the Government of the United States Virgin Islands as well as its populace
- free and open access to information for all residents of the United States Virgin Islands is essential

It is the mission of the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums to:

- provide service, information and other resources to the Government of the United States Virgin Islands
- support the development of an informed citizenry by providing access to a world of ideas and information
- identify, preserve and promote the historical and public records of the United States Virgin Islands
- provide support to all residents of the United States Virgin Islands in their pursuit of learning

The Division's projected priorities as outlined in its Projected Report aim:

- to improve the ability of libraries to provide public service
- to enhance our document storage capacities
- to further develop our public service capacity
- to expand our technological base
- to address the physical plant needs of our facilities
- to advocate for our libraries

Information and resources are provided to the Government of the United States Virgin Islands and the residents of the U.S Virgin Islands through several means. Each year provides the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums the opportunity to better our facilities in order to effectively serve our patrons. With the advancement of technology and the ever present need to update library materials while steadily offering the new, there is always room for improvement in all areas pertaining to Virgin Islands public libraries. To meet the public's needs and enhance services, the following goals are outlined.

LSTA Goals outlined for the next five years will collectively help all Divisional libraries and services.

Goal I. Strengthen and Support the Virgin Islands Automated Library System (VIALS)

Timeline: Years 1-5

VIALS is the divisional library network. All libraries utilize the Dynix catalog and a Windows NT/2000 network maintained centrally at the Territorial Library main offices. The VIALS network therefore provides Internet service, email, printing and desktop services to staff and public alike. It is the backbone of the Division and is heavily supported by LSTA. This includes the purchase and upgrade of all divisional hardware and software titles.

Monitor and evaluate competitive grants using outcome based evaluation methodology, as applicable.

Goal II. Purchase and install a library material security system

Timeline: Year 1

At present, divisional libraries do not have a book security system. Though all library facilities are safeguarded from break-ins by a security firm, materials are not protected. This results in a high volume of theft of library materials, which proves to be particularly costly when the materials taken are related to the Caribbean and/or the Virgin Islands. As our material budget is on the decline, it is vital current materials are protected and theft be controlled as much as possible.

Evaluation: Availability of Material Security System at all public libraries with statistics on current rate of loss since its installation

Goal III. Establish a Division-wide Summer Reading Program

Timeline: Years 1-5

Though "Reading is fundamental", it is an activity often neglected if not forgotten during the months of summer. Currently, Divisional libraries do not collaborate in the creation of a summer reading program. Each library devises its own initiatives drawing assistance from different community groups as necessary. While community involvement is essential to the success of library programs, there should exist a division wide summer reading program.

Evaluation: Using the survey methodology, participants and parents will be asked to rate the quality and success of the program

Goal IV. Acquire access to Online Databases**Timeline: Years 1-5**

As with other libraries, the Virgin Islands Public Library System is experiencing a decrease in its budget as provided by the local Office of Management and Budget. This is evident in both its monograph and periodical collections. However, while the Division has ensured it has a strong network of computers providing Internet access to library patrons, it has been financially impossible to subscribe to online databases, which can greatly supplement the libraries' book and periodical shortfalls. Awarded funds will be used to secure divisional libraries access to such databases.

Evaluation: Surveys will be available in the libraries, asking patrons their success rate in finding the information they were seeking and what tools proved the most helpful.

Goal V. Teaching And Learning Technology Lab**Timeline: Year 2**

As territorial libraries expand their electronic holdings, extensive teaching is necessary for staff and patrons to become knowledgeable on the tools provided. The Virgin Islands has a high immigrant population, with visitors from throughout the Caribbean and the world. These particularly will require special services from the library. A lab setting, one on each island will allow the libraries to offer special training to patrons.

Evaluation: Increased use by different populations.

Goal VI. Participation in library shared cataloging services**Timeline: Years 2-5**

Currently, Divisional libraries do not participate in any shared bibliographic utilities. Divisional libraries holdings are not shared with libraries outside the territory. This precludes the use of interlibrary loan services. While, the libraries are an associate member of OCLC, that service is not utilized. These utilities serve as cost and time saving tools for libraries. The location of the territory warrants use of such services as the libraries are not geographically close to any other similar facilities.

Evaluation: Increased holdings in the OCLC Union Catalog

Goal VII. Support the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Timeline: Year 1

The Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, though receiving its collection from The Library of Congress' National Library Service, is staffed and attains technology and supplies from the Division of Libraries. The Regional Library, located in St. Croix, is one of the last remaining without the means of accessing and submitting reports as well as keeping track of patron information electronically. NLS strongly recommends this change be made.

Evaluation: Acquisition of READS software

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Funds play an ever-increasing role in the ability of the Virgin Islands Division of Libraries ability to serve its community. Past LSTA funds enabled the Division to upgrade the libraries' network. Continued funding is essential to the accomplishment of Divisional goals.